



## 2016 Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Investment Application

### Frequently Asked Questions: Answers as of March 2016

#### I. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **Q:** *What is the maximum grant that can be made by the NBRC?*  
**A:** Maximum is \$250,000.
2. **Q:** *Of the total federal allocation to NBRC, what amount of grant funds are committed to projects in each state for 2016?*  
**A:** Approximately \$1.7
3. **Q:** *When will I be notified as to whether my application has been approved for NBRC funding?*  
**A:** The first week of August, 2016.
4. **Q:** *If my project is approved by NBRC, can the investment agreement be signed before I have evidence of full funding (match) for the project?*  
**A:** An agreement will be required to be returned by August 30, 2016, regardless of match funding being in place. However, recipients cannot begin work on the project prior to receiving a '**Notice to Proceed**'. A Notice to Proceed will not be issued until all match is secured and documented.
5. **Q:** *What happens if I am approved for NBRC funding but am unable to secure matching funds?*  
**A:** If match is not secured and documented by September 30, 2017, unless there are extraordinary circumstances, the Federal Co-Chair will de-obligate the funds and award them to other projects.
6. **Q:** *If approved for an NBRC grant how will I receive the funds?*  
**A:** After evidence of all matching funds has been provided and an investment agreement between the recipient and NBRC has been signed, NBRC funds are reimbursed on a reimbursement basis. Preferably monthly. Note that any matching funds or eligible project expenses cannot be spent prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed.
7. **Q:** *If I receive both NBRC and EDA funding, who would administer the investment?*  
**A:** Excluding State entities, all awardees will be required to hire a designated Local Development District to administer their investment. The application and Program Manual will provide additional information on this.
8. **Q:** *If I have any questions about NBRC or the application process, who do I talk to?*  
**A:** Christine Frost, Program Director, NBRC 202-590-0807 [cfrost@nbrc.gov](mailto:cfrost@nbrc.gov). Or the Program Manager for your state; their contact information can be found in the Program Manual found at [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov)

9. **Q:** *If our community is listed as an “Isolated Area of Distress” but is also in an “Attainment County”, are we eligible to apply for funding?*  
**A:** Yes, Make sure that you identify in the Application the Isolated Area of Distress that you are located in. For more information on Isolated Areas of Distress, see the NBRC website. [www.nbrc.org](http://www.nbrc.org).
10. **Q:** *Is there any other way that our community might be eligible to apply if we are in an “Attainment County” and we do not meet the criteria for an “Isolated Area of Distress”?*  
**A:** There are two situations that could provide eligibility in municipalities that are not “Isolated Areas of Distress”:
1. If the application covers more than one county, and the “Attainment County” is part of an application that consists of one or more Counties that are not “Attainment Counties”.
  2. If the project is regional in nature and is intended to benefit areas and populations that are external to the “Attainment County”. In this case, you must first obtain a “Waiver” from the Federal Co-Chair. More information can be obtained in the Program Manual found on the 2016 Economic and Infrastructure Development Investment page at the website [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov).

## II. ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

11. **Q:** *If I have previously received an NBRC investment am I eligible to apply again?*  
**A:** If a grantee has an outstanding investment with NBRC, they cannot receive additional NBRC investments until their current project has: 1. Submitted reimbursement requests totaling 75% or more of the project by August 30, 2016, and 2. Demonstrated that 75% of the match has been completed by August 30, 2016. So, you may apply, but the award may go to another entity unless the above criteria is met.
12. **Q:** *Can NBRC funds be used as matching funds for other federal grant or loan programs, even programs they specifically stipulate that other sources of federal funds cannot be used as a source of match?*  
**A:** Yes, the statutory provisions of the enabling legislation for NBRC allow NBRC funds to be treated as non-federal funding for match purposes. **However**, NBRC funds still maintain their Federal status and must be counted toward the 80% ceiling of federal funds being expended for any one project.
13. **Q:** *What is the maximum timeframe for an NBRC funded project?*  
**A:** The investment period (time that the project shall be completed) shall be October 1, 2016, to September 30, 2019, unless a waiver has been granted to begin the project prior to October 1, 2016.
14. **Q:** *We already have funds obligated for the project that we are proposing. Can these funds be part of our match if we start and/or complete the work before a NBRC grant would be awarded?*  
**A:** Generally, no. Eligible project expenses are only those incurred after execution of the investment agreement. There may be rare situations that would require information that cannot be elaborated on in a Q&A. Please contact the Program Director.
15. **Q:** *Can staff time be used as part of a match requirement?*

**A:** Yes, with the following exceptions: time that is used to match other programs cannot be used (counted twice, etc.); time must be recorded; cannot use federal employees time; are not included in any other federal grants; are part of the project budget.

16. **Q:** *If staff time is included in the cost of the project what is the rate that our organization can charge; can we charge our **Indirect Cost Rate**?*

**A:** Entities that have a Federal Cognizant Agent can submit with their application the letter from such entity demonstrating their Indirect Cost Rate, and budget their project accordingly. Those entities without an Indirect Cost Rate determination may use the regular pay of professionals plus 10% as their Indirect Cost Rate for purposes of budgeting for the project.

17. **Q:** *If volunteers are being used, and their time is being tracked for in-kind match for the project, what rate do we use to budget the project?*

**A:** Volunteer rate should be consistent with the national average

[http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time) which is currently \$23.07 per hour.

As with question 13, volunteers may not be: counted for the same activity in a different project (counted twice) or be federal employees. Additionally, their time must be recorded for reimbursements and you may not include any Indirect Cost Rate along with the \$23.07.

18. **Q:** *Does use of NBRC funds require compliance with Davis-Bacon re: prevailing wage rates?*

**A:** No, however if the project is also using funds from another federal agency that does require Davis-Bacon compliance, the entire project will be subject to these rates.

19. **Q:** *Can funds be used to purchase a conservation easement?*

**A:** Yes, however, a case must be made for how it is an economic development driver for the region. Each State may prioritize this differently, and it will be up to the States to determine how competitive this type of application is compared to applications that produce jobs. You are strongly encouraged to speak with your state Program Manager within your state. See [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov)

20. **Q:** What is the CFDA #?

**A:** The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number is 90.601. The Title is: Northern Border Regional Development

### III. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

20. **Q:** *Where can I access all NBRC application forms?*

**A:** [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov) is anticipated to be up and running by March 4, 2016. Any and all forms for the application will be available "go live," through this website beginning March 14, 2016.

21. **Q:** *On the Federal SF424 form, what should I enter as the Funding Opportunity and Title (Question 12)?*

**A:** Leave the Funding Opportunity # blank. The title should be "Economic and Infrastructure Development Investment Program"

22. **Q:** *On the Federal SF 424, for Question 17, what is the earliest start date I can enter for my proposed project?*  
**A:** October 1, 2016, unless you have waiver from the Federal Co-Chair to begin earlier. The proposed project start date cannot be before NBRC funds can be committed/obligated at the federal level.
23. **Q:** *On the Federal SF424, for Question 19, is the application subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?*  
**A:** No. The form that will be on the website will have box C already checked for you.
24. **Q:** *If I am including letters of support for my project proposal, who should they be addressed to?*  
**A:** The Federal Co-Chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission, Mark Scarano, 53 Pleasant Street, Suite 3602, Concord, NH 03301 and cc: the appropriate State Program Manager found in the Program Manual on the website.
25. **Q:** *Do I submit the investment application online via Grant.gov?*  
**A:** No, all applications will be sent to one location. At this time, that email address is still being determined, but the website and application materials will have all information available on March 14, 2016.

#### IV. MATCH QUESTIONS

26. **Q:** *If a Municipality/Applicant is being given land to use as match for a project, can the value of the land be used as match?*  
**A:** *In most instances yes, when the following criteria are met. The land/property may not be transferred to the City/Applicant until the City/Applicant has received a "Notice to Proceed" by the Federal Co-Chair. The value of the property may not exceed an appraisal by a qualified Appraiser. You may not use a municipal assessment as the value.*

***It is important to note that his Q&A will be updated as additional information is solidified. Please visit the website at [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov) after March 4, 2016 to ensure that you have the most up to date Q&A. (this document was last updated on March 6, 2016)***